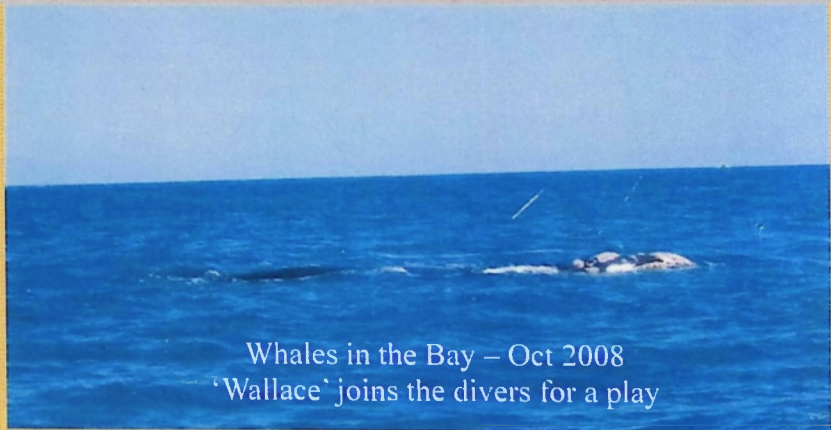


# FATHOMS

**DECEMBER 2008 -  
JANUARY 2009**



**VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP**



Whales in the Bay – Oct 2008  
‘Wallace’ joins the divers for a play

[www.vsag.org.au](http://www.vsag.org.au)

Postal Address: VSAG  
224 Wattle Valley Road  
Camberwell VIC 3124

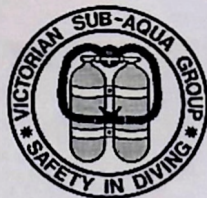




I'm forever blowing bubbles



# FATHOMS



*Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group*

**In this December 2008– January 2009 issue...**

<b>Article</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Page</b>
Editorial	Alan Storen	4
Wallace	John Lawler	8
Southern Right whales	Alan Storen	9
Sponge protection		13
Diving into the Past	John Lawler	15
VSAG Historical Diving Project	Rob Kirk	21
VARS Update		24
WW2 Russian Arctic Convoys	Mac Gregory	25
Member Profile— Mick Jeacle		32
Member Profile—Josie Mares		34
Rescue Advice		38
Member Profile—Ken Methven		42
Dive Report Prom	Alan Storen	44
Wilson's Prom Cup Weekend Report	John Mills	46
Dive Report 9 Nov	Alan Storen	49
Ship Wreck Goldmine		50
Dive Report 16 Nov	David Geekie	52
VSAG XMAS party report	Alan Storen	53
Emergency contacts		54
Tidal Stream Tables		55-57
VSAG Dive Calendar		58

**Committee are listed on Page 6**

**VSAG General Meetings**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in the month

**Editorial Submissions to:**

Bell's Hotel  
157 Moray Street (cnr Coventry Street)  
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm  
Alan Storen  
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storens@bigpond.net.au



## **Editorial**

### **Alan Storen**

*Where has 2008 gone??? It does not seem so long ago that we were welcoming in the 2008 New Year! I hope that you have managed to fit in many dives this year and that you have several planned for the exHMAS Canberra in 2009, and beyond. If you have not been in the water for a while now you should book in soon. It is also time for a reminder about getting you gear (tanks, reg and BC) serviced and also booking in for your 'annual' medical. I can say that with a clear conscience as I had my medical last month.*

*The weather has been much better of late and many of our planned dives have gone ahead. We have swapped some dives from the Sunday to the Saturday due to the weather forecast and if you are keen on diving please watch out for last minute changes – an email is usually sent or published on the web site, or both. Book in with the Dive Captain early. Reports are included for some of our recent dives and also reports from John Mills and myself on our Wilsons Prom/Melbourne Cup /SDFV weekend. The viz around the Heads Area has been superb with 12 to 15 m regularly quoted. Recently we have covered – Spectacular Reef, Magic Reef, Eliza Ramsden Wreck, The North Wall and The Drop Off.*

*The new committee positions are listed on Page 6 and we look forward to an exciting and challenging year. Any suggestions re: Speakers at Meetings, Dive sites, Social activities, etc are more than welcomed as we are working for you, the members, and without your feedback we could be working in a vacuum. Please forward ideas to any committee member. JJ has taken on the position of 'Dive Co-ordinator' and any suggestions re dive locations, type of dive – wreck, reef, hunting and gathering, day/night dive, weekend away, etc should be emailed to him. We do try to achieve a balance but need input. This does not change the usual Dive Captain responsibilities only the planning thereof.*

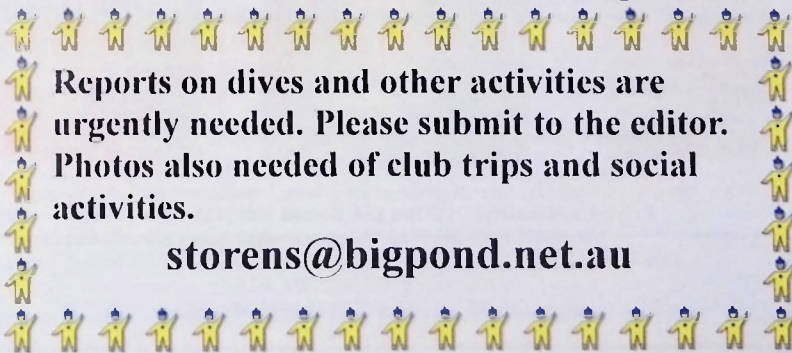
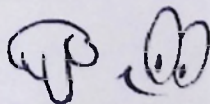
*Bridey obviously did too good a job last year is again the social secretary. The Christmas Party at Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron was a great success – even though I did not win a major prize!?!*

I congratulate Bridey on her organisation of the event. Thank also to JL for arranging the venue and his input. Some great prizes and many thanks to Pat Reynolds for the wetsuit , Chris Llewellyn for the Oilskin, the boat owners for their donation of a 'free dive day' on their boat, JL for the snapper, Robyn Woods for the 2xFree tank services, Peter Fear, aka The Dive Doctor for the diving gear he supplied, and ..... Thanks also to the members of the committee who contributed to the day and made the function run so smoothly. A special mention to Mike Kakafikas, spit roast chef extraordinaire for the meat which was superbly done and a very special mention to Emma for the deserts—fantastic, superb, ... run out of adjectives! Jude, Carol and Mike for the salads. Peter Briggs is the new Treasurer and if you have not paid your subs for this year (tut tut) please do so asap. This ensures that you get Fathoms on time and will save embarrassment when we 'name and shame' non financials.

This is the December- January Edition so again on behalf of all the committee I wish all members and their families/ loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and may santa bring you all the presents you desire and deserve. Do not forget to make a New Year promise: 'To do more diving with VSAG in 2009' and try not to break it! The Canberra is coming!

Some great article this edition – keep them coming please!

Keep blowing bubbles  
Alan



**Reports on dives and other activities are urgently needed. Please submit to the editor. Photos also needed of club trips and social activities.**

**storens@bigpond.net.au**

# Committee 2008 - 2009

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Committee (LtoR): Peter Briggs, Alan Storen, Bridey Leggatt, John Lawler, Greg Breese, Lloyd Borrett, Andy Mastrowicz, Michael Kakafikas, David Geekie, Greg Richards, David Ujimoto, Priya Cardinaletti.



New members on the committee: David Geekie, Greg Breese and David Ujimoto

Committee meets 2nd Wednesday of the month (except in January)  
ALL MEMBERS WELCOME  
Leighoah Hotel 1555 Dandenong Rd Oakleigh.

# WALLACE

**John Lawler**

VSAG and Get Under divers were treated to an unforgettable experience today in Port Philip Bay.

A call from Alan Beckhurst's boat Free Diver advised a whale was off Shorlands Bluff.

With our brilliant dive on the Lonsdale Wall over and all divers back on board we were about to head the SB when the beautiful whale was sighted moving south but in the shallows.

The boats moved within sight of the whale and stopped motors well away from it...then it happened...Free Diver got a visit and the whale went right under the boat and stayed long enough for divers on snorkel to get in and see it...fantastic...the whale was calm and receptive and interested.

It went about playing around the area and my boat followed at a long distance and when we sighted it we cut the motor...then it happened!!

The whale surfaced right at the stern and cruised right up to the boat and rubbed along the port side...had a look at us then moved to the bow turned around and swam back along the starboard side...it then dived shallow and swam right under our boat...we could see all the barnacles on it's head..



We named the whale Wallace...no reference to anything...it sorta rhymed.

A once in a lifetime experience....awesome and unforgettable.

Picture on the front cover...a dive day in heaven!!!!

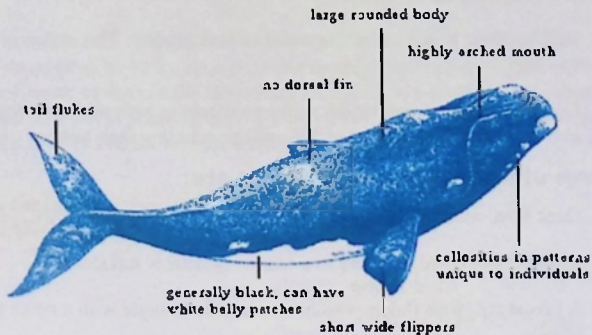
JL

Editor: I have it on good authority (aka Mary and Alan) that it might have been Wendy the whale but who cares!

Kirky's comment: Wow John, that is incredible!! I'm insanely jealous of course, but I am also well aware that you don't get to experience these things if you don't get out there! If dive reports like this don't inspire people to dust off the gear and get out diving, I don't know what will.. Cheers, Rob.



## Southern right whales



*Southern Right Whales have features that distinguish them not only from other whales but from each other.*

Whales belong to a group of marine mammals called cetaceans, including all whales, dolphins and porpoises. For a long time whales were incorrectly thought to be fish, but they breathe air like us.

In the early history of New South Wales, the southern right whale was a mainstay of the colony's export industries. It was thought that they were the 'right' whale because it swam slowly, floated when killed, and yielded high quantities of oil and baleen (whalebone). The whales were plentiful, and ships would stay for a while after bringing convicts to the colony, to let their captains hunt southern rights.

By the 1840s, southern right whales had been hunted out, and the whaling industry had collapsed. Populations of southern rights have been recovering ever since. Today, scientists estimate that there are around 5000 southern right whales in the world.

Southern right whales are protected throughout Australia, and are listed as a threatened species under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act.

### What do southern right whales look like?

All baleen whales have two blow holes, however in most species the two merge into one.

The southern right's two blow holes remain separate producing a distinctive V-shaped blow, a cloud of vapour blown out when the whale surfaces to breathe.



## Closer up, you can see southern right whales:

- Rolling forward to dive, until only their tails stick out of the water. This is called a fluke-up dive.
- Raising their heads out of the water to look around. This action is called a spy hop.
- Lying near the surface of the water, with one or both of their pectoral fins above the water. Sometimes they will be suckling their young.

## The features of a southern right whale are:

- Dark skin, with irregular white patches on the throat and belly.
- A round body which tapers to a relatively narrow tail stock.
- A broad tail, with flukes which form a wide triangle with a notch in the middle.
- Large, broad pectoral fins, which have a rectangular shape.
- A large, narrow head with a highly arched mouth.
- A series of natural growths called callosities on the front of the rostrum or head. The largest of these callosities is called the 'bonnet'. Callosities are also found on the whale's chin, on the sides of the head, on the lower lips, above the eyes, and near the blowholes.

Southern rights are **baleen whales**. They don't have any teeth, and feed by filtering food through 220-260 baleen plates which hang from each side of their upper jaws. The baleen is up to 2.8 m long, and is fringed by long, fine, greyish bristles.

Southern right whales can grow to about 17 m long and weigh up to 100 tonnes. At birth, their length ranges from 4.5 m to 6 m.

## Where can you see them?

Southern right whales visit southern Australia during the winter months, and they are increasingly found in NSW waters.

### WHALE MIGRATORY PATTERNS



The whales are often seen in very shallow water, including estuaries and bays. They have even been known to swim in the surf zone. During these times, they are not known to strand.

Sometimes you'll even be lucky enough to see mothers and calves together. They may play for a few hours or days in the same location, and it's important not to disturb them at these times. The calf is learning the life skills it will need before it returns to the Antarctic, and the mother can be very protective of her young.

### Quick facts - Southern right whale (*Eubalaena australis*)

<b>Length:</b>	Adults: 14m to 18m; Calves: 5m to 6m at birth
<b>Weight:</b>	Adults: up to 80 tonnes; Calves: 1 to 1.5 tonnes at birth
<b>Gestation:</b>	11 to 12 months
<b>Weaning age:</b>	11 to 12 months
<b>Calving interval:</b>	Generally 3 years
<b>Physical maturity:</b>	Age: unknown; Length: 16m (males slightly less than females)
<b>Sexual maturity:</b>	Age: 8 to 10 years Length: 12m to 13m
<b>Mating season:</b>	July to August
<b>Calving season:</b>	June to August
<b>Cruising speed:</b>	3km/hr
<b>Blow pattern:</b>	V-shaped bushy blow, up to 5m
<b>Protected:</b>	Since 1935

**From the desk of Alan Beckhurst**

The reason why I will not go for a swim in the Amazon.

A world record size Piranha !!!



Extracted from "Safety Net" MSV Newsletter.

Quote:

"Of the 82 commercial vessels involved in collisions and groundings in 2006-07 30% involved vessels greater than 150 mtrs in length.

Of the 14 investigations undertaken by Marine Safety Victoria in this period, 11 involved ships under pilotage"

JL

Friday 17 October 2008

## Media Release

### INTERNATIONAL UNDERWATER TREASURES FINALLY RECOGNISED

The Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) today commended the Scientific Advisory Committee's decision to list for protection a rare sponge community that had been threatened by the dredging in Port Phillip Bay.

Megan Clinton, Marine Campaigner, VNPA said it was a relief to finally see the State government acknowledge the unique nature of the sponge garden.

"The underwater sponge community, which includes 115 unique species in and around the Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park, is found nowhere else in the world," she said.

"This particular sponge community is considered by scientists to be highly significant to Victoria's marine habitat. Giving it legal recognition is a significant victory for Victoria's marine environment and to the local diving industry."

During the trial dredging in Port Phillip Bay in 2005, between 3000 and 6000 cubic metres of rock fell into the canyon where the sponge community was located, causing significant damage.

Since then, 550,000 cubic metres of rock has been dredged and it is anticipated that approximately 3,000 cubic metres of rock will have fallen into the canyon.

"VNPA and other leading environment groups believe the bay dredging may have had a catastrophic impact on the community. While the dredging has ended, we are yet to see how badly it has been affected," Ms Clinton said.

"While we celebrate the Scientific Advisory Committee's decision to protect the sponge gardens, we hope they are not lying under a pile of rubble."

Chris Smyth, ACF's Marine Campaigner, said the Australian government should reform the weak national assessment and approvals processes that allowed the sponge gardens to be damaged.


"Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett should note Victoria's recognition of this important habitat and should list the sponge gardens under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act)*," Mr Smyth said.

"This would give Australia's marine environment greater legal protection. The next steps are substantive reforms to the *EPBC Act* and the establishment of an Oceans Act.

"VNPA and ACF now call on the State government to conduct an audit of the site to establish the extent of damage to the sponge gardens caused by the dredging and to determine what will be done to restore the area."

For interview: Megan Clinton, VNPA, 0419 539 731 or Chris Smyth, ACF, 0438 123 536

Media contact: Sacha Myers on 9341 8113 or 0417 017 844



## Investment Advice

If you had purchased \$1000.00 of Nortel stock one year ago, it would now be worth \$49.00.



With Enron, you would have had \$16.50 left of the original \$1000.00.

With WorldCom, you would have had less than \$5.00 left.

But, if you had purchased \$1,000.00 worth of beer/wine one year ago, drank all the beer/wine, then turned in the cans/bottles for the recycling REFUND in some countries, you would have had \$214.00.

Based on the above, the best current investment advice is to Drink heavily and recycle.

Let people you care about know... and tell them to Start Now



VSAG PHOTO COMP  
Photos taken after 11 Jun  
and before 31 Jan  
Above and below water  
Massive prizes!!  
Send entries to editor

## “DIVING INTO THE PAST”

### A LOOK AT ARTICLES FROM THE ANNALS OF VSAG DIVING HISTORY.

With the EX-HMAS Canberra soon to become our newest and most exciting artificial reef and dive attraction, Diving Into the Past goes back just a few years for this edition to revisit the mighty EX Navy warship wreck dive trip to Western Australia to dive the Swan at Dunsborough and the Perth at Albany.

Some twenty VSAG members made this wonderful journey and from my perspective demonstrated the comrade and friendship that exists within our club..It was a truly memorable adventure for divers and partners.

The article chosen was written by Mick Jeacle.

Please enjoy Diving Into the Past...

IL

## **VSAG VISIT Western Australia – March 2003** **By Mick Jeacle**

*The jet engines roared into life as we sped down the runway, en route to Perth in sunny Western Australia. After some months of careful planning by John Lawler, we were off to dive the two Destroyer Escorts, HMAS Swan and HMAS Perth, and I must say I was looking forward to doing just that.*

*In a little over 4 hours we touched down, and in no time at all met up with others who traveled on different flights. Gear was loaded into a one tonne van and twenty VSAG divers and partners boarded two 20 seater mini buses, and we set off for Busselton, some 2 ½ hours south of Perth, but not before taking in the sights of Fremantle for a couple of relaxing and enjoyable hours.*

*Busselton is a lovely little town situated on a fabulous bit of coastline. It is a thriving community steeped in history, the most fascinating of which is the old wooden jetty which extends some two kilometers out into Geographie Bay. The first stage of this jetty was built in 1865, with further extensions due to the shallowness of the water made right up until 1965. Abandoned by the Government in 1972, and damaged by fire and cyclones through the years, it is now cared for by a local jetty preservation society.*

which charges a small fee for visitors to stroll its length, with these funds contributing to the ongoing upkeep. Well worth a dive. For those who are interested in learning more about the history of this jetty, and in viewing live web cam pictures of the underwater flora, visit [www.watercorporation.com.au/marinecam/index.cfm](http://www.watercorporation.com.au/marinecam/index.cfm)

After settling into the motel, it was off to the nearest pub for the desperates for a quick 10 pots (this to become the saying of yours truly for the rest of the trip) where we met up with Cape Naturaliste dive shop proprietor Alan Coyne, and John Jennings who assisted as a Divemaster during our stay. The next morning we all visited the dive shop situated just around the corner from our motel, where we filled out the necessary paper work and were soon on our way down to a very nice little beach near Dunsborough. This was to be the pick up point where Alan would manoeuvre his boat close into shore for us divers to board his boat for the short trip out to the wreck site. As there were 13 divers, we had to dive in two shifts, but this was not a problem as it was a very nice place to be.

## **HMAS SWAN**

Built :	Naval Dockyard – Williamstown Vic.
Launched:	16 December, 1967
Length:	Approximately 113 metres.
Displacement:	2,700 tons.
Commisioned:	By Royal Australian Navy – January, 1970.
Decommissioned:	September, 1996.
Scuttled:	December, 1997.

The wreck of the HMAS Swan lies in 31 metres of water, approximately 1.3 nautical miles off Cape Naturaliste. This is an idyllic location as it is protected from most winds, and from what I am told the days one can't dive the wreck due to bad weather are few and far between.

Alan tied up to his mooring buoy and gave us free reign to do our own thing, which suited me down to the ground. We wasted no time in kitting up and were soon in the water. A short swim to the main marker buoy saw us directly over the mast of the ship, which we descended and made our way towards the stern. Here we swam down underneath the stern to where the propellers would have been to catch a glimpse of the fish life, including a very large flathead which has called this area home. My computer indicated a depth of 107 feet at this spot which is the deepest part of the wreck.

From there we then swam into the large cut out in the stern and entered a large passageway that continued for the greater part of the ship, with rooms leading off to both



sides. Looking along this passage it soon became evident that one can always see a light source ahead, courtesy of the many cut out sections in the hull for diver safety. It also became evident that there was an upper and lower deck to explore. The first room I encountered must have been the laundry as it contained a huge washing machine and dryer, and what appeared to be an ironing press. Further we went, past a row of toilets, and inspecting many other rooms along the way. We soon reached what appeared to be the operations room with various items of equipment still in place.

We exited the wreck and swam to the bow area, dropping down from the deck to inspect the pointy end from a short distance. A very impressive sight, and I found myself wishing we had one of these just outside the Heads. Then back to the Bridge where, peering from outside through the row of windows we encountered Alan & Mary Beckhurst having a wonderful time inside, busily photographing in both stills and video. We entered the bridge from the starboard side, not realizing at the time that you could also do so via the roof. Here the navigator 's chair, binnacle and various items of electronic equipment still reside. My favourite was the one man porcelain urinal just outside the rear of the bridge area, and I'm surprised it is still there.

We were to have three more dives on the Swan, and we probably missed a lot as we didn't really know what to look for. However, it was agreed by all to be really easy diving, and with very little silting throughout the inside of the wreck, the visibility was very good. Decompression stops were spent on the mast, where we enjoyed the company of many large batfish as we watched Mary roll off yet another film on all the little bits that I would never think to look for.

After the first Swan Dive, the second party stayed on board and we returned to the Busseton Jetty for a dive. Now I'm not big on pier dives, but it is a long way from home and I was informed that it was a must. So in I went and yes I was surprised at the soft coral growth and the color on the pylons that I stayed for at least 20 minutes. Mary and Alan went down with their full armoury of photographic gear, and simply left the entire assortment on the sea floor, swapping and changing as they desired. Sure was a funny sight to see divers not in our group scratching their heads as they swam past \$'000's of camera equipment left unattended.

On Monday evening, we were invited to Alan & Debbie Coyne's home for a BBQ. This was a great night, with our hosts providing enough meat and sausages and salads to feed a regiment. Alan has this huge garage which contains everything from stereo to Billiards Table, but I was most intrigued to see him light the BBQ smack in the middle of the room. Without any flu system, save for a round hole cut into the roof lining, the smoke from burning fat was immense, but Alan accepted this as normal course. Not to mention the fiercely burning drip tray which was hastily carried out to burn harmlessly on the back lawn.

*The night was a fitting end to a wonderful 2 days spent in Busselton. Our hosts, Debbie & Alan were exceptional and one got the feeling that we had known them, and them us, for much longer. I am sure they were sad to see us go. Thanks folks; I am sure I will return one day in the not too distant future.*

*On Tuesday morning, after the usual fully cooked breakfast, we were once again aboard the buses and on our way to Albany, following the scenic route. I can't recall the how many kilometers it was to Albany but I seem to remember a time of some 4 1/2 hours was estimated to travel the distance. At least it would have taken that long, if Ross Luxford had not insisted we engage in a lot of tree hugging along the way. You had to be there*

*A lot of friendly rivalry emerged between the crews of the two buses; jockeying for position to be first away from the various stops etc. This seemed to work just fine, until we visited our last giant tree somewhere past Walpole. Llewey had not long previously taken the reins of our vehicle from yours truly, and had positioned it ideally pointing towards the road out. Only trouble was, when exiting with the other bus (driven by Ted Cornish) fair up our clacker, he turned into the road the way we came in, which just happened to be One Way. The noise in the cabin as we all cried out in unison was deafening, and I turned towards the other bus just in time to see Ted's laughing dial as he jumped us real good. Well, we never did recover folks, but we sped off at full steam determined to get to our Albany accommodation first. When we did arrive, there were the other bastards dancing around out the front, having taken some bloody short cut with the benefit of a fair dinkum map.*

*The accommodation here was a delightful little Guest House called "Discovery by the Sea." It is run by John & Elizabeth Roberts on behalf of their son. Following the room allocation, it was off to the Esplanade Hotel "for a quick 10 pots," and this was to be the main drinking hole for the rest of the stay.*

*The first night we made it back to the Guest House fairly early, and were all surprised to find that Manager John enjoyed a good old sing song. Of course, I too didn't need much persuasion to join in, and we raised the roof for an hour or two. We found out that John has sung in choirs and in various musicals, and the fact that he had never taken singing lessons seemed quite incredible. He was a natural.*

*In the early part of that first evening, Ron Moore from Albany Scuba Diving Academy called around to meet us and advise details of the next day's diving on the HMAS Perth.*

*Due to our number of divers (13) exceeding the capabilities of his boat, he advised we were booked on the Silver Star, a large 50 foot catamaran with deck space that had to be seen to be believed. Owned & operated by Paul Guest, it was a very comfortable dive platform indeed, made even more comfortable by hot cups of tea or coffee, biscuits, lunch etc., and being waited on by Ron's son. (sorry mate, can't recall your name.)*

## **HMAS PERTH**

<b>Laid Down:</b>	21 September, 1962 at Michigan USA.
<b>Launched:</b>	26 September, 1963
<b>Length:</b>	133.2 metres
<b>Displacement:</b>	4,900 tonnes
<b>Commissioned by RAN:</b>	17 July, 1965 at Boston, USA
<b>Decommissioned:</b>	15 October, 1999
<b>Scuttled:</b>	28 November, 2001 – King George Sound, Albany WA.

*The Perth was a Guided Missile Destroyer, and one of the last steam powered ships to serve with the Royal Australian Navy. She steamed over one million nautical miles during her career spanning 34 years, and saw active duty in Vietnam along with sister ships HMAS Brisbane and HMAS Hobart. The Hobart was scuttled South of Adelaide late last year, and the Brisbane is destined to be scuttled somewhere off the Sunshine Coast in Queensland at a date yet to be fixed.*

*The Perth sits perfectly upright in around 38 metres of water, about 500 metres from Seal Island, in King George Sound.*

*Two dives on the wreck were scheduled for the Wednesday, and after allocating our own buddies we were soon over the side. It was here that disappointment set in as the visibility appeared to be no greater than about 5 metres. This was confirmed when we commenced our descent down the mast, with the water taking on a cloudy green colour. I couldn't help but think of Mary's earlier complaints about the floating matter at the Swan site, and how it would spoil her pictures. Compared to this, the vis there was great.*

*Oh well, perhaps we arrived on a bad day, but I suspect that the wreck has been placed in the wrong spot, made evident by the amount of silt throughout the ship already. I would liken it to sinking a wreck in the middle of Port Phillip Bay, which I am sure would never happen.*

*The dive itself was still enjoyable, don't get me wrong. Like the Swan there are holes cut all along the side of the ship, as well as inside, to ensure that those wishing to penetrate the wreck can safely do so. There are many rooms to swim through, but without an intimate knowledge of the ship these were impossible to identify. Clouded silt was a major problem when following other diver/s so I spent my time endeavouring to go where no other diver had been during that dive. This seemed to work for a while but me ol' mate Ted couldn't keep up and I invariably lost him along the way. Much of the same for the second dive after a nice lunch. I noticed Mary and Alan left their cameras topside for that dive.*

*It was then back to camp and off again for a quick 10 pots for yours truly, and about 5*

*for Llewey. For some reason he was making me drink 2 to his one, and I never could fathom why!*

*The next day saw us heading out to the outer islands of Michaelmas & Breaksea, which from afar resembled our own Wilsons Prom. The water here was as expected, nice and clear and refreshed by the ocean currents. A nice white sandy bottom and good fish life to be seen everywhere. This would have been the ideal location for the Perth but apparently it was vetoed by the Harbour Master, no doubt a non diver.*

*Most of our divers elected to dive one of the old whale Chasers, the Cheynes 111 (Or was it Cheynes 11) I found out later that it was apparently a great dive, and I regret not diving it now. Oh well, I got to see more of the underwater scenery which was very much like the Prom.*

*The next day, the non divers elected to come out for the trip as there was plenty of room on board the Silver Star. Unfortunately the weather had deteriorated somewhat which made for a fairly bumpy trip out to Michaelmas. In a boat like this it doesn't matter, it was just a bit hard to walk in a straight line. Diving was much of the same and very relaxing, although we did swim a long way.*

*In between, we visited the Chinese Restaurant (basic fare) and the Italian Restaurant (much better) and finally the Thai Restaurant, which was excellent.*

*The next day we visited Goundry winery and the Sandalwood factory for lunch, and purchase of some goodies to take home to the dearly beloved who was left at home to cater for the whims of the two unmarried daughters and the dog. That evening we again experienced the best of WA hospitality when we were invited to a BBQ at Ron Moore's house. We all took along some meat and grog, with Ron generously providing everything else, including the cooking prowess of his son, who did a great job at the hot plate.*

*I took the opportunity of presenting John Lawler with a small token of everybody's appreciation for a job well done. As mentioned, it would have been very easy for John to pull out of the trip when he found out he would not be able to dive, but not so. He was in everything from helping with tanks and weight belts, to organizing restaurants and wines. The non divers were well catered for with their own vehicle and chauffeur in Bob Scott, to whisk them away to their desired destinations.*

*All in all, a very enjoyable trip in good company. We should do more of these in future. What about the SS Yongala eh Andrea?*

## VSAG HISTERICAL SOCIETY RESTORATION PROJECT:

### Part 4: Bilbo Bag It of the Shite

#### Rob Kirk

It's been ages since the last progress report. That's because it has been ages since there was any actual activity. In previous reports I've covered the initial condition report and a bit of history about the boat and that's about as far as it got. However, there has been strong interest from the older members, and at the 2007 VSAG Xmas function I was reliably informed by one jovial old hobbit that the boat did actually have a name. "Bilbo".

It transpires that throughout the fateful summer of 1973 the boys would ring John Goulding after lunch on a Friday and ask "What's on this weekend John?", to which John's standard answer was "Bilbo." That is what "Building a boat" sounds like after 27 pots.

And so it came to pass once again that, shamed back into action, I continued my quest.

Ripping out the floor and digging out the foam was good, fun, dirty work that was ideal for Saturday nights with the radio tuned to the footy. (Richmond games are best when aggressive demolition work is required.) When the inside of the hull was clear of foam I was amazed at what I saw. On the starboard side of the boat, the glass fibre cloth had been neatly laid and was smooth and solid. The fibreglassing started to deteriorate towards the keel where the first patches of loosely laid cloth had lifted from the stringers and was easily scraped off with a blunt chisel. This pattern continued in varying degrees to the portside bilge, which just looked plain ugly.



I believe that the evidence speaks for itself. Work on the inside of the hull must have started on the starboard side - bright, early and relatively sober on a Saturday morning. The first cans would have been cracked just before they started on the bilge channel, and they must have done the port side after lunch. I suspect that by this stage the port side wasn't the only port they were working on.



Alternatively, to be fair, we should entertain the possibility that perhaps this shift in condition across the boat could be explained as the consequences of the standard learning curve? After all, the boat was built by club members and friends. Certainly this group comprised some tradesmen, but they were not necessarily boatbuilders. Also, the quality of fibreglass materials available at the time must certainly be a factor. Even with a further 30-odd years of technological evolution today's polymers are finicky at best to work with.

Nah, we're talking about VSAG... I'm sticking to the grog-on theory.

Transom rot occurs in almost all fibreglass boats and it was interesting to see it at first hand. Bilbo's transom had been built with a solid 2" plywood core glassed in with woven roving, which is the strongest type of glass fibre cloth. Water had seeped in from various bolt and screw holes, was absorbed by the plywood which then began to rot. As time goes on, more water gets in and the rot spreads.

To create some space for attacking the transom I cut into the stringers about a metre forward of the transom and knocked them out. I was absolutely rapt to see that Oregon timber looking brand-new where it had been cut, thanks to the way the boat had originally been built. The transom had been installed, glassed over and then the stringers glued and glassed in as a separate structure. This had prevented the rot from spreading into the stringers, and I'll be rebuilding it the same way.

Most production boats have the timbers assembled and then the fibreglassing is sprayed on with a chopper gun. If you get rot in the transom of a boat built that way, it will eventually spread into the stringers. And I don't think there would be too many production boats built with Oregon stringers!

The plywood underneath had been reduced, in places, to a gelatinous mush that reeked of 30 years of salt water and cray guts. It was still wet and was easily dug out. Where the plywood had been glued into the transom there were still a few patches of solid veneer that had to be sanded away after it dried. There was a patch of delamination about half-way through the outer skin, that is, the fibreglass layers of the outer hull had literally come apart. I cut that back and decided/hoped that the delamination was localised to that one section of the transom and hadn't run under the hull. It should be relatively easy to build it up again with fibreglass mat and filler.

The rest of this year's footy season was spent grinding away at the stringers to remove any loose fibreglass cloth. I also decided to create space for a dive bin under the cuddy. As you can see from the photo there was certainly no shortage of bouyancy foam – the entire bow was full of it. Hopefully there's still enough in there. It's only a problem if I ever finish the damn thing and get it out on the water.



Remember, I said "if"...

Rob Kirk



## Update

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008

**In Brief** Work continues with ship preparation with the project still on target for a likely scuttling date sometime in early 2009. Sub-committee work is ramping up as the scuttle date approaches.

### Sub-Committee Reports

**Site Management** - Convenor: Alan Beckhurst We are awaiting the results of the site survey commissioned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). As reported last update, a potentially serious issue arose with questions being raised as to the depth of the agreed scuttling site. VARS was able to provide evidence that countered this concern. However, our survey was not able to establish details regarding the substrate. The consultants' report will cover this aspect. It will be important that the substrate does allow the ship to settle effectively – thus the need for a minimum depth of sand or similar. Work continues to ensure that the final arrangements for site access take into account the needs of all stakeholders whilst enabling the best possible arrangements for diver access both by commercial operators and club and private divers. This work is likely to continue for the next few months. It should be noted that VARS role in this is to ensure maximum consultation and input and to act as a conduit to government. VARS does not formulate policy – all we can do is to try and influence government direction.

**Ship Preparation** - Convenor: Jason Salter Work-to-date on the ship is progressing very well. All efforts are being made to produce a result which complies with all safety requirements yet delivers an outstanding dive experience. VARS is very happy with this work so far and believes that the finished product will be the best ship so far in terms of the dive experience. VARS hopes to be able to arrange an open day closer to the scuttle date so that interested parties can view the finished result before Canberra goes to her final resting place. We are hopeful that the Port of Melbourne will agree to a 4 metre navigation clearance. This will be an outstanding result meaning that we have the opportunity to retain substantial portions of the mast array. This will also mean that the site will have improved safety with divers able to complete safety stops using the mast. However, it should be noted that work will be required in order to make the mast useable and set it up as part of the final prepared ship. This work has not been included in the original budget prepared by Birdon. Consequently, it will be up to VARS to find and secure the necessary funds to achieve this. VARS is now evaluating how this might be achieved.

**Fund Raising / Membership** - Convenor: Warrick McDonald All VARS members are encouraged to purchase a T-shirt to support the activities of VARS between now and the scuttling date. This T-shirt is available on order either from VARS or via your local dive store (within Victoria). Other fund-raising opportunities are also being pursued. These include a very generous offer of artworks from Reg Cox. Reg is a well-known Victorian water-colour artist. He has generously offered a number of limited edition prints as well as an original painting (yet to be painted) of *Canberra* entering the heads for use by VARS in fund-raising efforts. The VARS Committee is currently considering how best to take advantage of this offer.

**Marketing / Promotion** - Convenor: Bryan McGoldrick A variety of marketing activities including the production of a 3D interactive video are currently being pursued. Some funding has been secured with more being investigated. Close contact has now been established with Geelong Otway Tourism and joint activities are being planned.

**Scuttling Celebration – Black Tie Ball** – Convenor: Mick Jeacle A Black Tie ball is being planned to celebrate the scuttling. This event will be held sometime in February and promises to be "THE" event of the year in the dive community. Watch this space for information over the next month. Numbers will be limited – so be ready to book your ticket as soon as the final arrangements have been made.



# WW2 Russian Arctic Convoys. Were they worth all the losses of both life and ships?

By Mackenzie Gregory.

## Introduction.

When Germany unexpectedly unleashed Barbarossa on June 22nd. 1941, invading the Soviet Union from the west, although Stalin had been warned prior to that event, he ignored all intelligence, believing it to be a big Allied hoax.

Norway has already been overrun by Germany, although Britain had gone to her aid, they withdrew their forces to assist France in her fight against the German Blitzkrieg threatening to engulf the whole country.

In hindsight it may have been better to stay in Norway as their northern ports were used as German bases to harry the Arctic convoys fighting their way through to the ports of Murmansk, Archangel and the Kola Peninsula, carrying war equipment sorely needed by Russian forces, as they battled against the Nazi invaders.

## Russian convoys.

Between 1941-1945, 42 Eastbound convoys, loaded to their plimsol lines with all types of war supplies, fought both the enemy and the appalling weather to deliver their valuable cargoes. Returning Westward convoys numbered 36.



**The ammunition ship *Mary Luckenback* explodes during an air attack on Arctic Convoy PQ18, September 14, 1942.**

It should be noted that statistics reporting on the total of merchant ships lost on both the east and westward trips will depend on the sources used. I have used :

Allied Merchant Ship Losses in Arctic Convoys, June 21-1941 – May 8-1945; Convoys to Russia 1941-1945, Bob Ruegg/Arnold Hague. 1992.

It lists by name and country ships sunk on arctic convoys, and I believe is a most reliable source. If we add the Merchant and Naval ship losses together, as a % of ships involved on Russian convoys we have a 9% loss, which resulted in about 3,000 deaths of both merchant and navy sailors.

**Total tonnage delivered to Russia.**

East bound convoys delivered about 4 million tons of the necessities of war, including 5,000 tanks and 7,000 + aircraft. Having survived the hazardous voyage through Arctic waters, in many cases the weather was a bigger threat or at least equal to that posed by both the German Navy and its U-Boats, plus the Luftwaffe, these ships generally empty had to again flog through 3,000 miles of dreadful weather to return to home ports.



The ice-encrusted 6-inch guns of HMS *Belfast* during convoy duties in Arctic waters, 1943 ( IWM neg A20 )

One must pose, was it all worth the loss of so many Merchant and Royal Navy sailors and could the equipment, a mere drop in the bucket compared to the vast quantity needed by Soviet forces, have been better used elsewhere by the Allies?



HMS *Edinburgh*, sunk on an Arctic Convoy carrying 5 tons of Russian Gold destined for the US.

### **Infamous Convoy PQ 17.**

Commodore J C K Dowding led convoy PQ 17, consisting of 36 heavily laden Merchant Ships out of Reykjavik, on the 27th June, 1942. Their cargo contained 297 aircraft, 594 tanks, 4246 military vehicles, both lorries and gun carriers, and 150,000 tons of military stores and general cargo; it was both a large and important load, designed to assist in rearming the Red Army.

As Murmansk had been virtually closed down after heavy bombing, all but 8 American ships were bound for Archangel, however, the "*Richard Bland*" ran aground before clearing the Islandic coast, and was left behind. This fateful convoy was now reduced to 35 ships, but in the Denmark Strait, the convoy ran into heavy loose ice, and the American "*Exford*," was too damaged to continue, and finally turned back.

### **British Admiralty gets involved.**

As PQ 17 passed to the North of Bear Island, the Admiralty signalled that "*Tirpitz*," and "*Hipper*," plus 4 Destroyers and 2 Torpedo Boats had all left Trondheim, the two major German ships had actually arrived in Altenfjord.

### **Three Signals from the Admiralty.**

"*London*," now received a signal on her bridge, at the same time as Tovey also received it 350 miles away to the West, it was prefixed with "Secret and Most Immediate" and was timed 2111 ( 9. 21 P.M ) it read: Cruiser force withdraw to the West at high speed.

This message could have but one interpretation, the "*Tirpitz*," was out and at sea.

Twelve minutes later, another signal arrived, timed, 2123 ( 9. 23P.M.) addressed to Broome, repeated to both Hamilton and Tovey, "Secret and Immediate" "Owing to threat from surface ships, convoy is to disperse and proceed to Russian ports."

Finally, a third signal arrived in a further thirteen minutes, at 2136 ( 9. 36 P.M.) which seemed to upgrade the previous signal, "Secret and Most Immediate," "Admiralty to Escorts of PQ 17, C in C, CS One. Convoy is to scatter."

These messages had but one meaning, at any moment, "*Tirpitz*," and her consorts would appear on the scene, this was the only interpretation to be made by the men at the centre of operations with PQ 17, then or even now.

To quote "Woodman," in his "Arctic Convoys," "But this was not what happened at all." Hamilton stretched his orders to the absolute limit, holding his Easterly course for another 30 minutes, then he swung his force about, and retired to the West.

Broome was also "very angry," he ordered Leading Signalman Elliot, to hoist the signal to scatter. "A white pendant with a red cross."

Commodore Dowding in "*River Afton*," repeated this signal at the dip, meaning he acknowledged this message, but did not understand it. Broome took "*Keppel*," alongside the Commodore's ship, and, using a megaphone, confirmed the order to an unbelieving Downing and his stunned Master, Captain Charlton. Broome hailed them. "Sorry to leave you like this-goodbye and good luck, it looks like a bloody business. "

With a downward haul on the signal halyards, this order was executed, convoy PQ 17 ceased to exist, and Commodore Downing gave up his command.

#### **Individual Merchant Ships were now on their own.**

An American, some years later commented thus :- "The Limey Navy, just turned and ran." That is how it must have looked to many who witnessed it, and how many who were not present at the time, or knew the exact circumstances believed it had been.

His ships now sped Westwards at 30 knots, expecting "*Tirpitz*," to appear at any moment. "Instead we wove our way amongst ice bergs, and some very suprised U-Boats who had been shadowing the convoy."

An unease now crept over all the British Naval Ships, something seemed totally wrong, but "what?"

The Admiralty 5 hours after their order to scatter, broke their radio silence to declare. "It is presumed enemy ships are North off Tromso, but it is Not repeat Not, sure they are at sea."

German air reconnaissance discovered the Home Fleet moving North East to cover the withdrawal of Hamilton's group.

If the German ships moved quickly against individual convoy vessels, there would be no threat from aircraft flown off British Carriers. By 1500 ( 3 P.M.) on the 6th. of July, "*Tirpitz*," "*Scheer*," and "*Hipper*," together with 7 Destroyers and 2 Torpedo Boats were out, and in the open sea.

The Soviet Submarine, *K21*, sighted and attacked "*Tirpitz*," they believed that this mighty German ship had been hit, in fact, the attack was abortive. A British Catalina and H.M.Submarine, "*Unshaken*," also sighted the German fleet, but all to no avail.

Whilst U-Boats and Aircraft were successfully sinking ships of convoy PQ 17, it was not considered necessary to put their surface ships at risk, and the German Naval Command, ordered the fleet to turn back and go home..

Notwithstanding protestations from the senior Naval staff on board the German ships, the Chief of Naval Operations, summed up the decision thus "Every operation by our heavy surface forces has been hampered by the Fuhrer's desire to avoid losses and reverses at all costs."

If this episode of scattering the convoy, P.Q 17, seemed bizarre, some of the events that took place, merely confirmed this fact, eg. Lieutenant. Leo. Gradwell, a New Zealander, by birth, commanding the Anti-Submarine Trawler "*Ayrshire*," gathered the Panamanian "*Troubadour*," the "*Ironclad*," and an American ship, "*Silver Sword*," and led them into the ice pack. "*Troubadour*," carried a cargo of bunkering coal, and drums of white paint. Locked in the embrace of the ice pack, these ships stopped engines, banked their fires, and then proceeded to slop white paint over themselves, to so effectively camouflage their upper deck works, that they fooled reconnoitring aircraft, who then reported that the pack ice was impenetrable.

#### **Ships sailing independently.**

Without the protection of a convoy and its escort, ships on their own as they struggled eastwards were picked off by U-Boats, sunk by aircraft, or damaged by aircraft then to finally succumb to a U-Boat attack.

#### **Ships sheltering in the ice.**

If we return to Lieutenant Gradwell, far away to the North West, he broke out his ship from the ice at 2100 ( 9 P.M.) on the 6th. of July, and in company with "*Ironclad*," "*Troubadour*," and "*Silver Sword*," crept Eastwards. They then coasted South, and entered Matochkin Strait, at Lagerni. contact was made with the Russians. "*Benjamin Harrison*" was also at anchor, whilst the "*Empire Tide*," had taken refuge in Moller Bay.

Finally, on 24th. of July, "*Azerbaijan*," "*Silver Sword*," "*Benjamin Harrison*," "*Ironclad*," and "*Troubadour*," all arrived safely at Archangel. Then, the only outstanding ship, the beached "*Winston Salem*," after pumping fuel oil overboard, was freed, and crewed by survivors from other ships, she was sailed into Archangel on the July 28th.

#### **To Sum Up.**

Allied losses were horrendous, two thirds of the convoy lost, 24 ships sunk, 8 by U-Boats, 8 by Aircraft, and 8 damaged by Aircraft, then finally sunk by the U-Boats.

**Lost Equipment:** 210 Bombers, 430 Tanks, 3350 Vehicles, and approximately 100,000 tons of Munitions.

**German losses:** Only 6 Aircraft.

**Deaths of Allied Seamen:** 153 Allied Seamen died from P.Q.17, but not one Naval Officer or Rating were killed in their defence.



**Arctic Encounter.** Painting by [Robert Bailey](#).

#### **Sir Dudley Pound.**

The First Sea Lord, Sir Dudley Pound, had indeed made a doubtful decision when he gave the order for the convoy "To Scatter," and the price paid was catastrophic!

#### **Were the Arctic Convoys Worthwhile?**

No doubt the 4 million tons delivered to Stalin's Russia via the Arctic Convoys played their small part in the defeat of the German invasion, but it is difficult to find any Soviet acknowledgement of this fact or any thanks for the sacrifices made by the men of the Merchant Marine, Royal Navy and US Navy to deliver the goods.

This gesture to the Soviet Union of running the gauntlet of German forces and dreadful weather conditions may well have shortened the war in Europe if this vast amount of war material had been applied elsewhere, and had not been delivered to a rather ungrateful country ruled by the Dictator Stalin.

Post war the former Allies and Russia would face up to a long period of the Cold War, whilst Russia occupied a great deal of central and the eastern part of Europe.

#### **Arctic Medal.**

For many years survivors of Arctic Convoys lobbied British Governments for the striking of a special Arctic Medal to mark their service in these waters in WW2. It all fell on deaf bureaucratic ears, the response being The Atlantic Star Medal covered such service.

**Atlantic Star 1939-1945.**



Recently the British Ministry of Defence has created an Arctic Star Emblem for all who served north of the Arctic Circle ie above 66 degrees 30 minutes North, for at least 24 hours in WW2.

This Emblem may be worn on the ribbon of either the 1939-45 Star, or the Atlantic Star. As an 18 year Midshipman in HMAS *Australia* in 1940, we spent time off Bear Island, well above the Arctic Circle and so I qualified for this Award.



**Arctic Star Emblem.**

The design concept of the Arctic Emblem was agreed with Arctic veterans' representatives. It is a small metal star, mainly enamelled white, with a red dot in the centre and above it a scroll with the words "The Arctic" in gold letters on a blue background. The star represents the Polar Star, the white colouring symbolises ice and the red centre represents the field of the flags of the USSR and Norway.

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## Member Profile : Mick Jeacle

**Year joined VSAG:** I think it was early 1981 after meeting VSAG divers 2 years in a row at Refuge Cove.

**How long have you been diving?:** I completed an Open Water dive course in 1976 and have been diving ever since. Like most older members I guess I was influenced by the old "Sea Hunt" television series.

**First diving experience:** In the early days I dived with a fellow who completed the course with me. He had an old boat and we mainly dived on hookah chasing crays at Kilcunda and scallops at the artificial reef off Aspendale. I also did the occasional shore dive when my beautiful wife Annie (lover in those early days) was available to carry my tank and weight belt from the car park down to the shore line.

**Favorite diving location in Melbourne:** No doubt the stretch of water between Queenscliff and Port Phillip heads. The diverse nature of the bottom, the effortless diving in a gentle current, and the occasional clear, blue water are definite attractions. The wrecks outside the bay are also favourites. Bring on the Canberral

**Most memorable diving experience:** This would have to be the time Barry Truscott, Alex Talay and I were descending the anchor rope at the Pinnacles at Forster/Tuncurry whilst on a VSAG Christmas trip. When we were at 70feet with about 50 feet to go, we noticed that a huge 14 foot White Pointer was coming up the anchor rope. We had nowhere to go, and I don't mind telling you that the Big Lloyd felt like a pilchard dangling on the end of a fishing line, completely at the mercy of this predator.

**Most unusual or amusing diving experience:** The sight of Chris Llewellyn picking up a 6lb cray on a dive at Cape Jaffa in SA, and me





having to peel it off him while it attached itself to his BC. I had to repeat the exercise a few minutes later and I remember that his eyes were sticking out like organ stops. We did very well that day and now call that particular site the "supermarket."

**Most valued piece of diving equipment:** That would have to be my regulator as without it I would be a mere snorkeler. This would never do, as one must get down there amongst it to experience the wrecks, the caves, the overhangs and everything else applicable to our great sport.

**Do you have a dive boat?:** Yes I do. My current boat is a Haines Hunter 540SC fiberglass half cabin. It has a Johnson 130hp outboard and is a very comfortable dive boat which tows a treat. My previous boat was a Monark Coaster runabout with an Evinrude 85HP on the back. Older VSAG members affectionately called it the *Yellow Brick* as she tended to land with a jolt when coming off a big chop. But she went everywhere, and then some, and I have some great memories of countless hours enjoyed in that boat.

**If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?:** Borneo and Sulawesi are appealing, and I am happy to say that I will be diving on a Sulawesi liveaboard next June. I would also like to dive some of the Dutch wrecks along the WA coast, and the Rowley Shoals sound fantastic. One day.

**Any diving words of wisdom:** Look after your life support gear (regulator, computer, BC) as I imagine that a regulator failure at 150 feet with no buddy in sight would send a feeling of panic up ones' spine, more so than coming face to face with a white pointer on the anchor line.

**Any other comments:**

I have enjoyed some 28 years as a member of VSAG, and in that time have met some good friends, and seen many characters come and go. Recently a few of us formed the *Old Hogs* cycling club and we are having a lot of fun with that. Without VSAG I am sure that I would not have experienced so many great diving adventures, both here and overseas. In the words of the bloke who drives his model train through his house in that TV commercial (RACV I think), *It's great to belong!*"

## Member Profile: Josie Mares

(not new but certainly not old)

### Year joined VSAG:

Sometime around December 1997 or January 1998. I'm not exactly certain when, but I do remember the first meeting I attended was the December 'pre-Christmas' non-meeting at Bells. I was greeted by the two best looking men in the club – John Lawler and Des Williams.



### How long have you been diving?:

I learnt to dive in Cairns in November 1992.

**First diving experience:** My very first dive was on Saxon Reef in the Great Barrier Reef on 25 November 1992. I know this because I have it all detailed in my scrapbook. That won't mean anything to all the VSAG blokes but I'm assuming a few females still read Fathoms and they'll understand.

**Favorite diving location in Melbourne:** I love diving anywhere that doesn't involve strong currents or long boat rides. One day I'll get over the motion-sickness thing but until then – I'd have to say Flinders Pier for a shore dive or Lonsdale Wall for a boat dive.

**Most memorable diving experience:** I've been lucky enough to dive some of the most beautiful places on earth so it would be difficult to select only one experience to stand out above any other. If I was to use 'local' as a criterion, I would have to say the day I saw an entire nursery of baby cuttlefish at the end of Flinders Pier was really special. Every single 'baby' was on exactly the same angle, all facing the sun and all silhouetted against the light piercing the water. It was a unique sight so would have to count as memorable. Other specials have been the day I first touched a shark (Great Barrier Reef), or the manta rays playing above my head (Ulex Island) or the first time I saw garden eels in the Solomon Islands and thought I was hallucinating or ...

**Most unusual or amusing diving experience:** It's probably not a good story to admit too but I don't mind if you all have a laugh at my expense, so here

goes. It was my first Melbourne dive and nobody thought to mention the current. I was on Neville's boat along with a couple of kiwi rugby players and someone else whom I can't remember. When we arrived at the dive site, Nev dropped anchor whilst we all got ready. I said I was going to gear up in the water and everyone looked at me as if I had two heads. Did I point out that nobody mentioned the current? Anyway, they tried to talk me out of it but I insisted so off the back of the boat I went and the boys handed my gear over. I slipped one arm through my BC, turned to slip the other arm in and saw the boat about 500 metres away. I was only in the water for about a minute and was already speeding off to Tasmania. Did I happen to whine that nobody mentioned the current? I decided to start swimming which was just as stupid as jumping into Port Philip Bay and not knowing about the current so poor Nev had to up-anchor and come and get me. He was very understanding and forgiving and to this day, has never been rude enough to bring up the topic – probably because he forgot to tell me about the current.

**Most valued piece of diving equipment:** My dive buddy – currently John.

My ex-Sydney dive buddy was the very best and when I first joined VSAG, I did put in a request for anyone who wanted to take up the reins from where Ed left off. Ed is a microbiologist so always managed to find all the little things most people would miss on a dive. He also did weight-lifting in his spare time so ALWAYS carried my tank. He would both shake me into, and peel me out of my wetsuit after it shrunk and would put the heater on in the car so as soon as I was peeled, I could warm up and get dressed in the car whilst he gallantly froze in the car park. Then, we would go out for breakfast, he would drop me at work and take my gear home to his place, wash it, dry it and return it over the weekend, ready for our next Wednesday morning (pre-work) dive. To date though, I've not had any offers. I just don't know where chivalry has gone!!!

**Do you have a dive boat?:** Where's my Dramamine.

**If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?:** I was going to say anywhere warm however, if I could dive anywhere in the world, I would have to assume that money wasn't an issue so I can only say, "everywhere warm".

Failing that, Lonsdale Wall without any chop on the bay or any current (ever), or any ships traveling by (or overhead) and on a day when the water temperature actually gets to the warm bath stage of about 28°, would be really, really nice.

## When there's trouble on the water, will you be part of the lifesaving solution--or part of the problem?

It could happen to you: As you wait your turn on the back of the boat, the diver on the platform struggles to get comfortable in his gear before awkwardly stepping into the water. As you move to the edge of the swim step, he starts screaming for help a few yards off the stern. He throws away his mask and dips beneath the surface. Popping up, he sputters saltwater, screaming again, and bobs under once more.

In a dive emergency like this, everyone on the dive boat falls into one of two categories: part of the lifesaving solution or part of the problem. Which one are you?

To help you find out, we've outlined four common emergency scenarios and the proper responses to them. But before we continue, let's be clear: While many of the techniques and procedures covered here are taught in a rescue diver course, no magazine article is a substitute for proper training. Our goal here is to show you the importance of rescue certification, help you understand how dive accidents happen, provide practical advice on how you can avoid being a victim, but most of all, to stress the importance of a calm, rational response in a crisis. When dive accidents turn fatal, the root cause is almost always panic--that highly charged state where rational thought is replaced by adrenaline-fueled instincts. Panic can overwhelm victims and bystanders, which is why the common reaction among untrained divers to an emergency is to stand there shocked as the crew pushes them out of the way. Even if you aren't directly involved in an emergency, flailing about in the water ineffectively or standing on the deck of the boat like a deer in the headlights certainly doesn't help, and in fact, may even hinder a rescue.

### Scenario I: Panic on the Surface

Let's start with the unfortunate diver above, who stepped off the boat before turning his air on. He's sucking saltwater, and he can't get his BC to inflate. He's obviously in a full-blown panic. What do you do?

**Rescue Plan:** A rescuer's best course of action with a panicked diver at the surface is to help the victim without getting into the water. All dive vessels should have safety floats of some type, usually a life ring or float ball, and most have long-handled boat hooks, all of which can be thrown or held out to a diver in the water. If for some reason those objects are not immediately available, or the victim is too freaked out to grab them, enter the water and grab the diver without becoming a victim yourself. Always go in the water with some sort of flotation device. If you're already wearing your scuba gear, your BC will work--inflate before approaching the victim.

Approaching a panicked diver from the front puts you within his tunnel vision, the same tunnel vision that may cause him to scramble onto anything or anyone in an attempt to keep his head above water. Always approach a panic victim from the side or from behind so you can keep control of the situation. Once you reach the diver, grab his tank valve and hold on securely. That way, if he attempts to twist around, you stay behind him and he can't grab you and force you under. If necessary, you can even grip the sides of the tank with your knees. When you do this, fully inflate his BC --the reason for his panic may be that the tank isn't turned on, so crack the tank valve to inflate his BC if this is the case. Next, lean back so your body is partially beneath him and his face is out of the water. Speak to the diver firmly, in reassuring terms like "Relax," or "I'm here to help you." Don't yell or show your own level of excitement because this will add to his anxiety. Once you are firmly in control, swim him back to the boat and help him get on board.

**Prevention Tips:** Victims in this type of situation often ask, "How did I get here?" The answer to that question is usually a lack of preparation. For example, scrambling to get in the water and jumping in without your fins or, more frequently, without your air turned on. Rushing through your gear setup or your pre-dive checks, or waiting until the last minute to find a missing mask or fix a rotted fin strap can cause you to overlook important aspects of your preparation. Before your next giant stride, be sure to:

Inspect all of your equipment before you pack it for your dive trip.

Have any equipment problems repaired before you go diving.

Arrive at the boat on time so you can assemble your primary equipment before you even leave the dock.

Once you're suited up, safety check your own equipment as well as your buddy's.

Enter the water completely geared up: BC inflated, fins on your feet, mask on your face and regulator in your mouth.

**Most important: Don't panic.** If you make a mistake and step off the boat unprepared, swim immediately back to the boat and grab the ladder. Air not turned on? Reach back and crack the tank, or have another diver do it. Even in the most drastic situations, you can always drop your weights, inflate your BC (normally or orally) and alert someone on the boat. Clear-cut, simple actions like these are the difference between minor embarrassments and tragic accidents.

**EDITOR: Scenarios 2, 3, and 4 will be included in future magazines**

An elderly Italian man who lived on the outskirts of Rimini, Italy, went to the local church for confession. When the priest slid open the panel in the confessional, The man said: 'Father ... During World War II, a beautiful Jewish woman from our neighborhood knocked urgently on my door and asked me to hide her from the Nazis. So I hid her in my attic.'

The priest replied: 'That was a wonderful thing you did, and you have no need to confess that.'


'But there is more to tell, Father... She then started to repay me with sexual favors. This happened several times a week, and sometimes twice on Sundays.'

The priest said, 'That was a long time ago and by doing what you did, you placed the two of you in great danger. But two people under those circumstances can easily succumb to the weakness of the flesh. However, if you are truly sorry for your actions, you are indeed forgiven.'

'Thank you, Father. That's a great load off my mind. I do have one more question.'

'And what is that?' asked the priest.

'Should I tell her the war is over?'





**A Lot of Protection at a very Small Cost!**

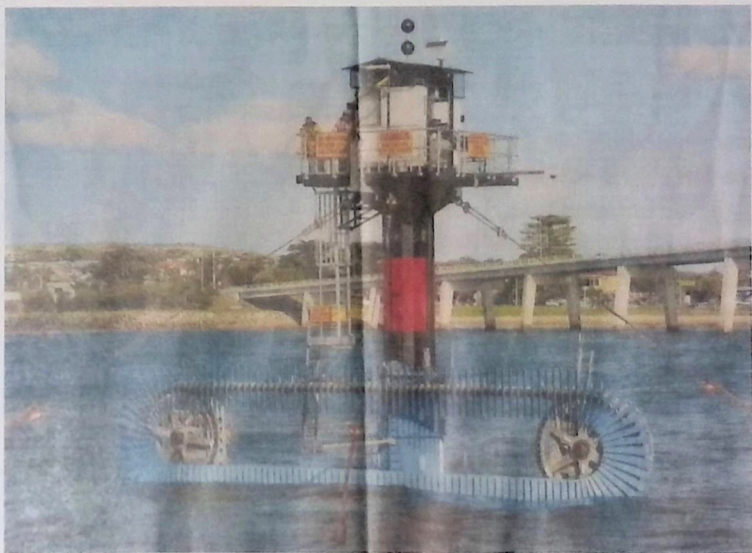
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- Travel Assistance Benefits**  
Travel, Personal, Legal, Medical
- Dive Injury (Treatment) Insurance... Optional**
- Subscription to Alert Diver**  
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Excessives are not in excess on DAN! DAN's 24/7 experts in dive accident management take care of you no matter where you are. Focus on what's most important... enjoying your diving!

**Emergencies Happen... Are You Prepared?**

**DIVERS ALERT NETWORK**  
Head Office - Australia • Ph: 61 3 9886 9166  
Fax: 61 3 9886 9155 • Email: [info@danasiapacific.org](mailto:info@danasiapacific.org)





## **Have you heard about this?**

A relatively small 150kwatt, \$1million turbine named Nereus and driven by tidal currents has been placed in the water at San Remo near Phillip Island (see pic). Off Newhaven Pier !!

The company [Atlantis] says it is keen to put \$6m of turbines off Victoria's coastline. Tim Cornelius indicated they are looking to install in WA next year but also considering the Heads area. Quote: "...there are also strong currents off Port Phillip Heads and off Queenscliff."

Interesting and another challenge for us as we navigate the dive sites.

## MEMBER PROFILE: Ken Methven



**Year joined VSAG:** Early 2007

**How long have you been diving?:**

I started out as a free diver and Spearo in my teens. Didn't take the Scuba plunge till June 1998.

**First diving experience:**

My first scuba dive was at Portsea pier in the middle of winter. I still like to mingle with the sea dragons there.

**Favorite diving location in Melbourne:**

My favorite dive site in Melbourne would be Captain Nitro's droppoff. I love the sponges and fish life. But anywhere on the Lonsdale wall will suffice.

**Most memorable diving experience:**

One of the most memorable diving experiences of late was with JL at the lost reef. The crew were JL and Peter Briggs. Dive buddies were Rob Kirk and Takae. Seas were calm, visibility that went on forever and in particular, a school of long finned pike that meandered in to envelop us, then slowly pass us by. It was simply stunning to watch.

**Most unusual or amusing diving experience:**

Watching two painted stinkfish show off to each other, then fight hammer and tong, collapse to the sand, then swim off in different directions. (Probably both claiming victory.)

**Most valued piece of diving equipment:**

My most valued piece of diving equipment would have to be my dive buddy and partner Takae. She is my spotter, my eyes. When you have such a treasured piece of equipment, the camera is quite valuable when it comes to recording what you have found.



Do you have a dive boat?:

No I don't.

If you could dive anywhere in the world, where would you most like to dive?:

Malaysia, Sipadan would have to be right up there. The country is safe, clean and affordable, and the diving is immaculate.

Any diving words of wisdom:

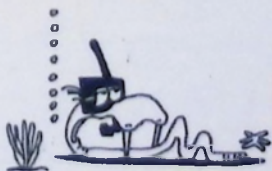
Don't pee in your wetsuit and don't forget to breathe.

Any other comments:

Play hard. Dive safe.



"It's a house made out of sand. What did you think I meant when I said I owned a beach house?"



I'VE GOT THE BENDS!!!

## Dive report – Cup Weekend at the Prom

**Alan Storen**

*The weather forecast was not good and the 2007 trip had been a blowout. VSAG had no boats going and ..... we went anyway! Well the following went from VSAG: Alan Storen, Barry and Marie Truscott and grandchildren x2, Charlie and Judy Brincatt and family, friends of Charlie and Family, Greg Richards( although officially with BRUG), Pat Reynolds, Priya and John Mills. Peter Briggs was going but pulled the pin after reading the forecast.*

*On the Friday morning I had a phone call from a friend that has a property near Coal Creek – it had an old shaft, now part flooded, leading to an old coal mine – or so he thought. Did I want to dive it? Silly question! Rang Alan Beckhurst to see if he wanted to join me but he was working till mid-day and could not make the window of time that we had. With appropriate safety gear I dropped down the shaft - actually climbed down the ladder till I reached the water, about 10m underground, then sank gracefully as only a diver can to the bottom of the shaft- about 30m. It was an old ventilator/ safety/emergency exit shaft that had not seen any humans for 40+ years, became flooded about 20 years ago according to legend. At the bottom of the shaft was a safety/ muster tunnel where, I assume, miners would gather if there was a problem in the mine, and await further instructions or scramble to the top via this laddered shaft. The tunnel was about 2m high, 4m wide and about 20m long. At one end was a solid wall and the other lead to the main shaft - I assume where coal was taken out. In the main shaft we could see the tracks that carried the coal trucks but a metal barrier that was welded shut barred our entrance. Our torches flashed up and down this shaft but there was not much else to see. The viz was ok but we noticed that as our bubbles hit the roof they would dislodge particles which came cascading down – I assume coal! We reeled ourselves out and ascended the ladder to the surface. An interesting dive!*

*Back to the Prom.*

*I arrived mid afternoon and Pat, Bazza and Marie had almost set up camp. I did not take the trailer as I went solo and a two man tent was more than adequate. We had a fairly leisurely day on Saturday and renewed acquaintances with many divers from other clubs.*

*Bazza and Marie, on grandparent duties, spend much of the day looking after the kids and Bazza managed a bike ride or two over the weekend.*

*Some boats managed to get out and 15-20m viz was reported.*

*The now traditional SDFV BBQ was held on the Saturday night and this year was run by Latrobe Valley Scuba Club. Well organised and great food and company. The usual raffle was held and as Cathy Williams was not present, VSAG was not represented amongst the winners.*

*On the Sunday I managed to 'beg' a dive on Alan Beckhurst's boat and we dived Skull Rock and the Twin Peaks with a visit to the seals in between. Greg R also dived with Getunder and dived the wreck of the Anser and Twin Peaks. The diving was great – swim throughs, big rocks - usual prom brilliance!*

*On the Monday I was required in Melbourne to attend a wedding – no not mine a neighbour, and departed late Sunday night only to arrive at my place at the same time as the rain. Don't think it rained much at the prom but many ventured home on the Monday as the weather was not fantastic and some mechanical problems with the Getunder boats probably discounted diving.*

*Can't talk for the other attendees but I for one had a great time and as I did not hear of any complaints I assume the others did likewise. A very enjoyable trip!*

*Alan*



## Wilson's Prom – Cup Weekend

**John Mills**

*As with most of our Prom Trips we like to take a leisurely drive down on the first day. As such most things get left to the last minute. This trip started with the Friday night panic "Do we have air in the tanks" we checked the tanks by the tried and true method of lifting them up assessing how heavy they felt and confidently predicting which ones are full and which are empty. By our reckoning all the tanks were full. Another good method is to check the valves and those with tape on them are most likely to be full. Being a fairly methodical person I did not trust the method we used, I needed numbers, so the trusty regulator was dug out of the tub and attached to the tanks, sure enough we needed 3 fills.*

*Saturday started with a trip to the dive shop to fill the tanks. The rest of the morning was filled with packing the gear and the trailer for camping. This took longer than usual, as I had removed some of the camping gear from the trailer where it normally lives for my recent pilgrimage to watch the V8's at Bathurst. All preparation was completed for the targeted 2.00pm departure. We had a good trip down without incident and arrived at the campsite next to Pat at about 5.00pm. The tent was set up and we wandered over to the barbecue, which was in full swing. We enjoy the Cup Weekend trip as it gives us a chance to catch up and mix with our Buds from the other clubs. There was a good turnout for the barbecue with all the familiar faces and characters there from the various clubs. Our Marlin buddies were there and I realised that I had known them for over 15 years as we had dived with them and been on a number of trips with them over this time. It was good to catch up with Marty as he and his family are relocating to Darwin and we may not catch up with them for a while. There was a small VSAG contingent present with Alan, Greg, Pat, Baz and Marie, Alan Beckhurst and Mary and Charlie Brincat made one of his exclusive appearances. The usual raffle draws and speeches were given. Alan Storen gave an update on the HMAS Canberra progress to the wider diving community. It was nice to have a barbecue without the cold and rain of the last few years. Everyone dispersed on dusk with anticipation of good diving weather for the Sunday. Priya had secured a couple of spots for us with the Marlin guys.*

The next morning was a beauty clear skies and a slight breeze. All the spotters had returned from the beach and declared "launch was go". All our gear was set up and loaded on the boat. Once we had got our dry suits on we went back to the boat and it had gone. I asked Marty's wife Caroline where the guys were and She indicated they had just left. This was out of character for Marlin as they are one of the more casual groups and punctuality is not normally one of their Fortes. I resigned myself to a walk to the beach and headed off. The boat and trailer then caught up to us not long after we headed off and Marty said, "We had to get some fuel". All the launches went smoothly with everyone chipping in and helping one another. It was noted that if you want to retrieve the trailer it's a good idea to attach the rope at 2 points on it otherwise it wants to pivot around in circles. We headed to the Glennies and anchored where the swim through were. The water had that beautiful blue colour about it which indicated we were in for a high viz treat. Sure enough when we dropped in the water was gin clear (15°C). We checked the anchor looked up and could see the boats on the surface. A great dive was had swimming through the swimthroughs and checking everything out. The obligatory seal was there as well. After the dive we headed in to the sheltered lunch area and caught up with more divers from the various clubs. A second short dive was then held and we headed back in before the wind came up. All the boats were successfully retrieved and back home we went.

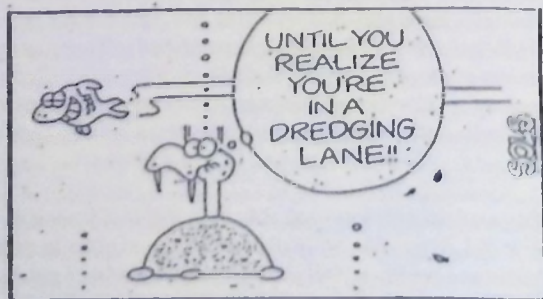
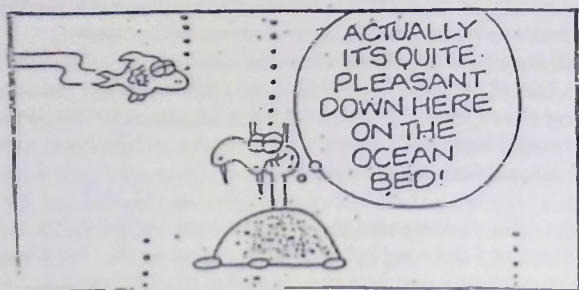
That night the Prom turned on its usual show and up came the wind. The tent survived without incident. I did heed Priya's advice and set up the Guy Ropes. The next Morning Patrick emerged from the comfort of the Van and said "I didn't hear any wind last night". I spent most of the day watching DVD's in the tent (Modern technologies great with battery packs and portable DVD's and I-Pods). Priya did what she does best walking around and talking to people. We spent the afternoon in the sun down at Black Rock doing what divers do when it is Windy, making up stories and drinking. As the Sun set the wind appeared to drop. The Marlin crew was fairly optimistic about getting out the next day.

There was some wind around the next morning. The guys decided to wait as they felt it would drop, it did. Priya took off to dive and I got on the bike and rode up to the Mount Oberon Car Park. Still feeling energetic when I got back I decided to run to squeaky beach and back. After that was done I started to pack up. I ran into Baz and asked if he'd done any riding. "He said he went for a short ride the day before in his jeans with a jacket, he got to the foot of

Mt Oberon and decided to keep going". That was a fair effort I thought. He did say "Yeah I did get pretty hot though". The intrepid divers returned and we finished packing. Everything went away dry, which is always good. Pats favorite site became vacant so he hooked the van up and had relocated in about 5 minutes. This is a definite advantage to having a caravan.

We then drove back home without incident.

Again a good cup weekend was had as it provides an excellent opportunity to meet with and catch up with others outside of VSAG.



## Dive Report - November 9

Alan Storen

*When going diving I usually check the weather report, check the tide tables again and look to see what the commercial divers are doing (DivePicGroup and OzDive). If they cancel or shift from outside to inside the heads it gives a good indication of the conditions. The forecast was not great, the tide times were good and one of the commercials had cancelled an dives and the other had changed from outside to inside.*

*We went anyway. Starters were Greg Richards, Adam Borge, Michael Kakafikas, Jr. and myself. The slack was at about 10.30 and the call was to do Spectacular Reef. Water flat as and little wind. I am not sure we found the centre of the reef, probably the west end but the diving was fantastic and viz 20+m. Huge very friendly ray accompanied the divers for part of the dive and a seal tried to liberate Mike's bounty at the deco/safety stop.*

*The second dive was a drift dive over Magic Reef and as the name suggests was magic. Again we only covered part of the reef as the current was starting to pick up and we went where the current took us, but the viz was still up and the fish life good. All indicated that this was the dive to do on the next slack.*

*With the boat back on the trailer before 2pm it was off to the 'Sorrento' for a quiet debrief and story telling and then return to Melbourne for lawn mowing, cleaning, house chores, etc - just what all divers do after every dive day - actually I went to Dromana to visit my father and just got home in time for the Sunday roast!*

*Another great day on the water - join us sometime!!!!*



## Shipwreck's a gold mine for thrilled archaeologist

Rowan Philp Published: May 04, 2008 South African Times

Dieter Noli thought a small bag would be sufficient to hold priceless gold coins from the shipwreck. Within an hour, he realised he needed to use his Stetson hat. But by the end of the day, the archaeologist needed a bucket to hold the ship's treasure, as 2500 coins, minted around 1500AD for Spain's Queen Isabella, emerged from the Namibian sea bed.

Unearthed by a De Beers mining operation on the Namibian coast this month, the ship — thought to be a Columbus-era Portuguese explorer — has been hailed as the greatest maritime archaeological discovery in Southern Africa.

The unusually large store of gold also represents one of its greatest mysteries since the vessel, which was "armed to the teeth", was already on its way home, fully laden with an equally mysterious cargo.

Noli, 52, said it was "the most gold ever found at an archaeological site in Africa since the huge find at the Valley of the Kings in Egypt".

He said the evidence suggested that a rogue captain, or even a pirate, may have died in a bid to complete a medieval African arms deal.

The ship, thought to be a 25m "caravel", of the type used by Christopher Columbus, was discovered on April 1, when a geologist, Bob Burrell, noticed copper ingots in a coastal mining site operated by De Beer's local subsidiary, Namdeb.

Protected by a 30m-high earthen "sea wall" erected by the company, 12km north of Oranjemund, the site is a strip of excavated ocean bed, 7m below sea level and 200m out from the beach.

Although the ship is completely destroyed, metal artefacts and some human bones were concentrated in a 500m<sup>2</sup> layer of sand. A large rock that likely sank her stands just metres from where 10 cannons were found.

Noli, chief archaeologist on the project, said: "Never in a million years would this hip have been found, if it weren't for the mining operation. But I knew it would happen — I told them sooner or later you'll find a wreck; and I've been waiting patiently for the last 20 years ... but now: jackpot!"



**ALL AROUND MY HAT:** Archaeologist Dr Dieter Noli counts the day's 'take' of gold coins discovered near the remains of a 500-year-old shipwreck found during mining operations at sea off Namibia.





The excavation uncovered a box of muskets, a box of swords and five different types of cannons. Some weapons were so outdated, even for the time, that it suggests that the captain stuffed the arsenal with anything he could lay his hands on.

Robert Blyth, curator of Imperial History at Britain's National Maritime Museum, said the find was "of great significance, internationally".

"For such an early voyage to be trading in that part of the world, so soon after the pioneers, is very significant, and will hopefully tell us a lot more about how Europe pushed out," said Blyth.

Aside from more than 50 tusks, Noli's team recovered more than six tons of copper, and "tons more" of a metal thought to be tin — "which is the combination you'd need to make cannons".

"(The ship) was carrying strategic raw materials, a huge amount of gold, a big and pretty strange arsenal and she seems to have been sailing on her own," said Noli.

"And she was doing it in the time of the explorers, not the traders."

He said two human bones had been preserved by decayed iron, along with bone splinters and a set of toes, still attached to a shoe sole.

Namdeb spokesman Hilifa Mbako said the Portuguese and Spanish governments were informed of the remains, and maritime authorities there have been asked to help identify the vessel.

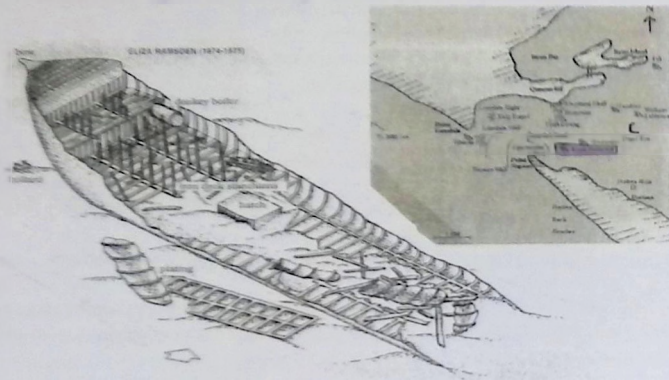


**Editor: Bobby Scott eat your heart out!**

Article supplied by Herb Epstein. Permission from South Africa Times #7492008



## Diving Sunday 16th November



The gloomy weather reports earlier in the week didn't improve so the cray bash out of Flinders was never going to work. However our intrepid DC kept his nerve, even though the forecasts continued to deteriorate. Two boats and 7 divers met at Sorrento at 10:00AM on Sunday morning. It looked like the only option in the southerly blast would be to dive Portsea Hole, but once again our steely nerved DC pushed for the limit and both boats met up over the Eliza Ramsden for the ebb slack.

Divers: Daid Geekie, Daniel Hompas, Alan Storen, Leo Maybus, Chris English, Peter Briggs and Greg Richards.

With a shot line nicely placed near the bow and only one ship coming through the heads the first group of divers went in early, experiencing quite good vis for an ebb slack dive. Current was OK, though there was a fair amount of surge. Plenty of fish life and they even saw some crays. Pete was still salivating 20 min after the dive. With everyone back on board there was still time for a second set of divers to go down, while one crew broke into the day's rations of hot dogs.

The second group also enjoyed a 30min dive before the current started to pick up. Both boats then headed for the shelter of the Nepean Headland for a lunch of fresh hot dogs, complete with mustard and tomato sauce.

With lunch out of the way it was agreed scallops were the way to go so we headed for the beds off Rye. The pickings varied, but Leo got carried away and eventually left his filled catch bag on the bouy line for the crew to retrieve.

Both boats headed back to the ramp, with some members debriefing at the Sorrento pub. It was great to be diving with a potential new member (Daniel) and to have Leo back in the water.

Another very pleasant days diving.

## VSAG XMAS PARTY REPORT

**Alan Storen**

*[more photos on the back cover and inside front and back pages]*

*"The forecast at the start of the week looked bad and the party might be inside". How wrong was that! The day was fantastic and the weather could not have been better. Not too hot, not cold – just perfect. The numbers were down but that did not stop the vsagers who know how to party. About 40 starters when the under 15s were counted. We had several apologies due to a bad back (Mick Jeacle), sick and injured (Greg Richards, Andy Mastrowicz), family-in-law commitments (Tippo) and that did not help with the numbers.*

*The venue was the Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron and many thanks to JL for his arrangement of the venue. Again could not have been better.*

*The food ... Well what more can be said. Mick Kakafikas was in charge of the spit roast and the lambs were cooked to perfection. Some even went back for seconds, and thirds and fourths – must have been good Matt! The salads were great -supplied by Jude, Carol and Mike and complemented the meat. Lloyd was in charge of the bread and probably catered for about 100. He also supplied the lollies and nibbles and there are a few stories to tell – but modesty prevents me – aren't you lucky Yvonne!*



*The deserts were supplied by Emma and they were fantastic. One look at the photos will give you an idea – and there were more in the fridge!*

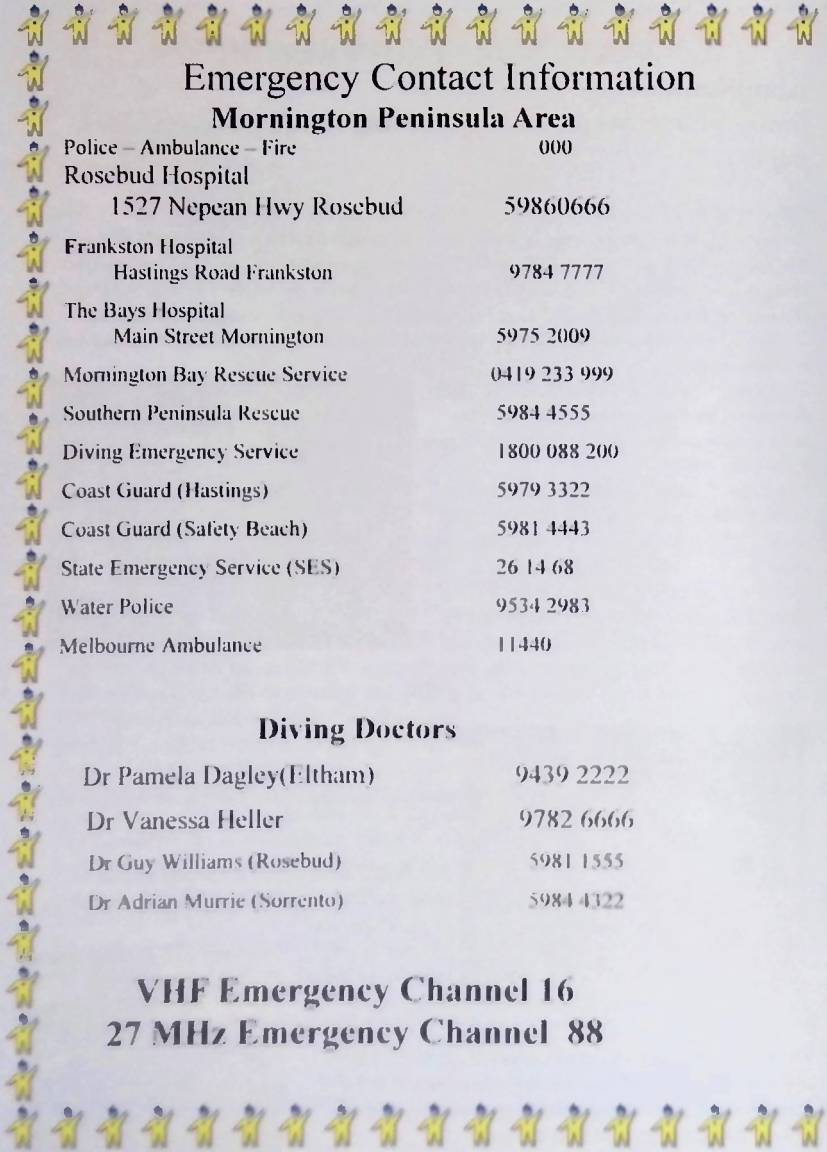
*The Prizes were again great and thanks to many for their donations. I think we had more prizes than people and most went home with*

*an early xmas present. Some even had three or four!*

*The company... always great to catch up with vsagers and the latest gos. I hope all enjoyed as much as I did! Again thanks to Bridey for her organisation, and the others on the committee that assisted.*

*Alan*





## Emergency Contact Information

### Mornington Peninsula Area

Police – Ambulance – Fire	000
Rosebud Hospital 1527 Nepean Hwy Rosebud	59860666
Frankston Hospital Hastings Road Frankston	9784 7777
The Bays Hospital Main Street Mornington	5975 2009
Mornington Bay Rescue Service	0419 233 999
Southern Peninsula Rescue	5984 4555
Diving Emergency Service	1800 088 200
Coast Guard (Hastings)	5979 3322
Coast Guard (Safety Beach)	5981 4443
State Emergency Service (SES)	26 14 68
Water Police	9534 2983
Melbourne Ambulance	11440

### Diving Doctors

Dr Pamela Dagley (Eltham)	9439 2222
Dr Vanessa Heller	9782 6666
Dr Guy Williams (Rosebud)	5981 1555
Dr Adrian Murrie (Sorrento)	5984 4322

**VHF Emergency Channel 16**  
**27 MHz Emergency Channel 88**

**Tidal Streams at the Heads— DECEMBER**  
**Italic times start of EBB**  
**TIMES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED FOR DAYLIGHT SAVING**

<i>Mon 1</i>	<i>Tue 2</i>	<i>Wed 3</i>	<i>Thu 4</i>	<i>Fri 5</i>	<i>Sat 6</i>	<i>Sun 7</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>618</b>	<b>651</b>	20	53	125	156	229
1209	1241	<b>720</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>908</b>
<b>1648</b>	<b>1728</b>	1311	1342	1415	1450	1531
2345		<b>1808</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1935</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2122</b>

<i>Mon 8</i>	<i>Tue 9</i>	<i>Wed 10</i>	<i>Thu 11</i>	<i>Fri 12</i>	<i>Sat 13</i>	<i>Sun 14</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
307	352	352	<b>139</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>936</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1046</b>	610	809	938	1033
1618	1715	1819	<b>1134</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>1448</b>
<b>2231</b>	<b>2400</b>		1926	2031	2132	2228

<i>Mon 15</i>	<i>Tue 16</i>	<i>Wed 17</i>	<i>Thu 18</i>	<i>Fri 19</i>	<i>Sat 20</i>	<i>Sun 21</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>547</b>	<b>630</b>	6	51	132	214	254
1120	1205	<b>708</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>918</b>
<b>1556</b>	<b>1704</b>	1252	1342	1434	1527	1619
2318		<b>1810</b>	<b>1913</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2113</b>	<b>2217</b>

<i>Mon 22</i>	<i>Tue 23</i>	<i>Wed 24</i>	<i>Thu 25</i>	<i>Fri 26</i>	<i>Sat 27</i>	<i>Sun 28</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
337		<b>42</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>443</b>
<b>952</b>	427	532	700	839	950	1041
1709	<b>1028</b>	<b>1105</b>	<b>1149</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>1439</b>
<b>2330</b>	1759	1850	1943	2035	2125	2211

<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tue 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>523</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>627</b>	6	38	108	139
1121	1157	1229	<b>653</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>807</b>
<b>1539</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>1721</b>	1259	1329	1400	1435
2253	2331		<b>1806</b>	<b>1851</b>	<b>1937</b>	<b>2025</b>

## Tidal Streams at the Heads—JANUARY

*Italic times start of EBB*

**TIMES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED FOR DAYLIGHT SAVING**

<i>Mon 29</i>	<i>Tue 30</i>	<i>Wed 31</i>	<i>Thu 1</i>	<i>Fri 2</i>	<i>Sat 3</i>	<i>Sun 4</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>523</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>1121</b>	<b>1157</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>1329</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>807</b>
<b>1539</b>	<b>1632</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>1806</b>	<b>1851</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1435</b>
<b>2253</b>	<b>2331</b>	<b>2406</b>	<b>2438</b>		<b>1937</b>	<b>2025</b>

<i>Mon 5</i>	<i>Tue 6</i>	<i>Wed 7</i>	<i>Thu 8</i>	<i>Fri 9</i>	<i>Sat 10</i>	<i>Sun 11</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>212</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>830</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>858</b>
<b>1512</b>	<b>1553</b>	<b>1642</b>	<b>1740</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>1308</b>
<b>2118</b>	<b>2221</b>	<b>2342</b>		<b>1849</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2115</b>

<i>Mon 12</i>	<i>Tue 13</i>	<i>Wed 14</i>	<i>Thu 15</i>	<i>Fri 16</i>	<i>Sat 17</i>	<i>Sun 18</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>442</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>714</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>1013</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>1245</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>813</b>
<b>1433</b>	<b>1558</b>	<b>1713</b>	<b>1817</b>	<b>1915</b>	<b>1418</b>	<b>1501</b>
<b>2217</b>	<b>2311</b>	<b>2359</b>	<b>2442</b>		<b>2009</b>	<b>2102</b>

<i>Mon 19</i>	<i>Tue 20</i>	<i>Wed 21</i>	<i>Thu 22</i>	<i>Fri 23</i>	<i>Sat 24</i>	<i>Sun 25</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>234</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>842</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>1013</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>912</b>
<b>1542</b>	<b>1622</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>1750</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>1137</b>	<b>1245</b>
<b>2158</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>2357</b>		<b>1845</b>	<b>1949</b>	<b>2054</b>

<i>Mon 26</i>	<i>Tue 27</i>	<i>Wed 28</i>	<i>Thu 29</i>	<i>Fri 30</i>	<i>Sat 31</i>	<i>Sun 1</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>411</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>708</b>
<b>1014</b>	<b>1058</b>	<b>1132</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>1304</b>	<b>1337</b>
<b>1407</b>	<b>1528</b>	<b>1629</b>	<b>1719</b>	<b>1805</b>	<b>1849</b>	<b>1935</b>
<b>2150</b>	<b>2238</b>	<b>2318</b>	<b>2354</b>	<b>2425</b>	<b>2456</b>	

## Tidal Streams at the Heads—FEBRUARY

*Italic times start of EBB*

**TIMES HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED FOR DAYLIGHT SAVING**

<i>Mon 2</i>	<i>Tue 3</i>	<i>Wed 4</i>	<i>Thu 5</i>	<i>Fri 6</i>	<i>Sat 7</i>	<i>Sun 8</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
127	200	233	310		<b>40</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>731</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>850</b>	352	446	609
1412	1448	1528	1614	<b>927</b>	<b>1015</b>	<b>1127</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>2114</b>	<b>2212</b>	<b>2322</b>	1709	1819	1942

<i>Mon 9</i>	<i>Tue 10</i>	<i>Wed 11</i>	<i>Thu 12</i>	<i>Fri 13</i>	<i>Sat 14</i>	<i>Sun 15</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>315</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>605</b>	30	105
825	955	1053	1142	1226	<b>637</b>	<b>707</b>
<b>1303</b>	<b>1445</b>	<b>1614</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>1818</b>	1307	1345
2103	2210	2303	2349		<b>1910</b>	<b>1958</b>

<i>Mon 16</i>	<i>Tue 17</i>	<i>Wed 18</i>	<i>Thu 19</i>	<i>Fri 20</i>	<i>Sat 21</i>	<i>Sun 22</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
140	213	246	321		<b>6</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>736</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>900</b>	359	445	554
1421	1457	1531	1609	<b>930</b>	<b>1003</b>	<b>1051</b>
<b>2044</b>	<b>2129</b>	<b>2215</b>	<b>2306</b>	1653	1746	1857

<i>Mon 23</i>	<i>Tue 24</i>	<i>Wed 25</i>	<i>Thu 26</i>	<i>Fri 27</i>	<i>Sat 28</i>	<i>Sun 1</i>
Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack	Slack
<b>223</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>536</b>	12
813	933	1018	1055	1127	1159	<b>602</b>
<b>1211</b>	<b>1359</b>	<b>1524</b>	<b>1625</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>1801</b>	1232
2017	2125	2218	2301	2339		<b>1846</b>

# VSAG Meeting and Dive Calendar

Dive Date	Location	Dive Captain	Phone	Meeting Point	Time
<b>December</b>					
7	Portsea Hole	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Sorrento	8:30am
10	Night dive -TBA	Lloyd Borrett	0418 170 044		
14	Cray Dive -Phillip Island	John Lawler	0414 922 916	Newhaven	9am
18	<b>Social night at Bells—NO formal meeting</b>				
21	Xmas Dive—TBA	Peter Briggs	0412 585 546	Sorrento	8:30am
<b>January</b>					
4	Wreck dive	John Lawler	0414 922 916	Sorrento	9am
7	Night Dive	Lloyd Borrett	0418 170 044	tba	
11	Castle Rock	Peter Briggs	0412 585 546	Sorrento	
15	<b>General Meeting</b>			Bells	8pm
17	Lonsdale Wall	David Geekie	0419 300 686	Sorrento	9am
21	Night Dive	Bridey Leggatt	0437 943 370	tba	
24	Nepean Wall	Alan Storen	0417 017 446	Sorrento	9am
26	Phillip Island	Alan Storen	0417 017446	Newhaven	9am
<b>February</b>					
1	Flinders	Andy Mastrowicz	0402 060 711	Flinders	9am
7	Coogee	Mike Kakalikas	0439 044 122	Sorrento	9am
15	Rosebud Reef/ Scallops	Greg Richards	0408 287 754	Rye	9am
17	Night Dive	Bridey Leggatt	0437 943 370	Tba	
19	<b>General Meeting</b>			Bells	8pm
22	Come along and find out	Peter Briggs	0412 585 546	Sorrento	9am

Interested in a shore dive ( Saturday, etc) or a night dive (shore or boat). Ring Alan Storen on 9803 3573 (H). Gear is available for use (free) — wetsuits depending on size!







The fantastic food at the VSAG Xmas Party 30 Nov 2008

